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- (75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): CRONIN, James, T. [US/US]; 188 Green Giant Road, Townsend, Delaware 19734 (US). ELKINS, Thomas, Shields [US/US]; 488 Gregson Place, Waveryly, Tenneessee 37185 (US). HELBERG, Lisa, Edith [US/US]; 111 Barnacle Court, Middletown, Delaware 19709 (US). MERKLE, James, Elliott, Jr. [US/US]; 20289 Hayes Road, Long Beach, Mississippi 39560 (US). MIRABELLA, Steven, Edward [US/US]; 613 Blue Heron Cove, New Johnsonville, Tenneessee 37134 (US).
- (74) Agent: SINNOTT, Jessica, M.; E.i. Du Pont De Nemours And Company, Legal Patent Records Center, 4417 Lancaster Pike, Wilmington, Delaware 19805 (US).

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## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC 7 C01G23/02

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#### B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)  $IPC\ 7\ C01G$ 

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

CHEM ABS Data, EPO-Internal, PAJ, WPI Data, INSPEC, COMPENDEX

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
K	US 744 074 A (NATIONAL LEAD COMPANY)	1,3,7,10
	8 June 1953 (1953-06-08) page 2, line 21-71	2,4-6,8, 9,11
<b>K</b>	DATABASE CA 'Online! CHEMICAL ABSTRACTS SERVICE, COLUMBUS, OHIO, US; JAEGER, LUBOMIR ET AL: "Purification of crude titanium tetrachloride with surface-active substances" retrieved from STN Database accession no. 56:44009 XP002281482 abstract & CS 97 317 C (JAEGER, LUBOMIR;SIMEK, BRETISLAV) 8 July 1957 (1957-07-08) -/	1

χ Patent family members are listed in annex.
<ul> <li>*T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</li> <li>*X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</li> <li>*Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</li> <li>*&amp;* document member of the same patent family</li> </ul>
Date of malling of the international search report  09/06/2004
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<u> </u>	INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT	PCT/US2004/000765
	ation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT	
Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Υ	US 2 592 021 A (WALTER FREY ET AL) 8 April 1952 (1952-04-08) column 5, line 51-75; example 1	1-11
<b>Y</b>	US 2 600 881 A (EDWARD RICK CHRISTIAN ET AL) 17 June 1952 (1952-06-17) cited in the application example 1	1-11
	O (continuation of second sheet) (January 2004)	





Inte onal Application No PCT/US2004/000765

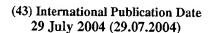
Patent document cited in search report		Publication date		Patent family member(s)	Publication date	
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US 2600881	Α	17-06-1952	NONE			

#### REVISED VERSION

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#### (19) World Intellectual Property Organization

International Bureau





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(54) Title: PURIFICATION OF TITANIUM TETRACHLORIDE

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#### B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC 7 - C01G

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

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Х	GB 744 074 A (NAT LEAD CO) 1 February 1956 (1956-02-01)	1,3,7,10
A .	page 2, columns 21-71	2,4-6,8, 9,11
X	DATABASE CA [Online] CHEMICAL ABSTRACTS SERVICE, COLUMBUS, OHIO, US:	1
•	JAEGER, LUBOMIR ET AL: "Purification of crude titanium tetrachloride with surface-active substances"	
	XP002281482 retrieved from STN Database accession no. 56:44009	
	abstract & CS 97 317 C (JAEGER, LUBOMIR;SIMEK, BRETISLAV) 8 July 1957 (1957-07-08)	
	-/	

X Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.	χ Patent family members are listed in annex.
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance  "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date  "L" document which may throw doubts on priority clalm(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)  "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means  "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention  "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone  "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.  "&" document member of the same patent family
Date of the actual completion of the international search  21 September 2004	Date of mailing of the international search report  2 S. CA. CA.
Name and mailing address of the ISA  European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentiaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer  Werner, H

## INTERNATIC L SEARCH REPORT

Intern \Application No
PCT) US2004/000765

US 2 592 021 A (WALTER FREY ET AL)   Relevant passages   Relevant to claim No.	C.(Continua	tion) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT	
8 April 1952 (1952-04-08) column 5, lines 51-75; example 1  US 2 600 881 A (EDMARD RICK CHRISTIAN ET AL) 17 June 1952 (1952-06-17) cited in the application example 1	ategory *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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		AL) 17 June 1952 (1952-06-17) cited in the application	1-11
		i .	

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Patent document cited in search report		Publication date		Patent family member(s)	Publication date	
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CS 97317	С		NONE			
US 2592021	A	08-04-1952	CH CH CH DE FR	262267 A 265393 A 265394 A 867544 C 969391 A	30-06-1949 30-11-1949 30-11-1949 19-02-1953 19-12-1950	
US 2600881	A	17-06-1952	NONE			

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(54) Title: PURIFICATION OF TITANIUM TETRACHLORIDE

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# PURIFICATION OF TITANIUM TETRACHLORIDE CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

Cross-reference is made to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/439190 filed on January 9, 2003, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a process for the removal of multiple metal chlorides from a crude titanium tetrachloride stream produced by chlorination of titanium-bearing compounds, and more particularly to a process wherein the removal of multiple metal chlorides occurs in a single reaction vessel.

In the production of titanium tetrachloride, raw materials, including ilmenite or rutile ores or other titanium-containing materials such as those obtained from beneficiating these ores, are reacted with chlorine and carbon (carbochlorination) to yield a mixture of metal chlorides in a crude titanium tetrachloride stream, from which titanium tetrachloride of sufficient purity may be recovered that may be used as a starting material to make titanium metal or titanium dioxide pigment.

Common metal chloride impurities present in the crude titanium tetrachloride include chlorides and complex chlorides of aluminum, niobium, tantalum, and vanadium. These metal chloride impurities are not susceptible to removal by distillation because of the proximity of their boiling points to that of titanium tetrachloride or their solubility in the titanium tetrachloride. They can have a detrimental impact on downstream processes. Thus, it is important to remove them or treat them to inhibit their detrimental properties.

Aluminum chloride, for example, is highly corrosive and attacks the metal materials of construction in the equipment downstream of its formation; thus, aluminum chloride must be rendered non-corrosive via treatment with a passivating agent early in the processing of making crude titanium tetrachloride.

Niobium and tantalum chlorides may condense downstream and cause fouling problems. Conveniently these two metal chlorides may be removed in the passivation of the aluminum chloride through their preferential reaction with certain aluminum passivating agents.

Water, sodium chloride, sodium hydroxide or a mixture of these are the most common agents added to passivate aluminum chloride. The passivated aluminum compounds are more easy-to-separate from the crude titanium tetrachloride stream than aluminum chloride. Aluminum passivating agents are selected to form aluminum compounds that are not corrosive to the equipment. See, for example, U.S. Patents 2,600,881; 4,125,586; and U.S. 4,521,384. Furthermore, as taught by Bonsack in U.S. Patent No. 4,070,252, use of water to treat crude titanium chloride streams also converts niobium and tantalum chlorides to species insoluble in liquid titanium tetrachloride, which can be readily removed by filtration or other simple separation techniques.

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Vanadium chlorides form colored species that must be removed if the titanium tetrachloride is to be used for production of titanium dioxide pigment. Typically, treatment agents are added to the crude titanium tetrachloride to chemically modify these vanadium compounds so that they may be removed. Therefore, there is a body of art that teaches treatment for removing vanadium chlorides from titanium tetrachloride, but this body of art is essentially separate from that of the passivation of aluminum chloride in titanium tetrachloride.

The prior art in the passivation of vanadium chlorides discloses the use of catalytic metals, such as iron and copper or other agents such as activated carbons, hydrogen, hydrogen sulfide and a number of organic compounds, such as oils, esters, and amines. Examples of prior art teachings for removal of vanadium compounds from crude titanium tetrachloride include the following. Swiss Patent No. 262267, published in 1949, discloses removing colored metal chlorides (Cr, and V) by treating the crude titanium tetrachloride, at an elevated temperature, with a metal-free organic compound which is carbonized by the chlorides. U.S. Patent No. 2,560,424 discloses a method to remove the colored impurities from titanium tetrachloride by simultaneously adding to the crude titanium tetrachloride small amounts of aluminum metal and anhydrous aluminum chloride. Australian Patent No. 219,385 teaches the use of metallic sodium to remove vanadium impurities from titanium tetrachloride.

While methods have long been available for treatment of crude titanium tetrachloride, treatments to remove the metal chlorides of aluminum, niobium and tantalum have been practiced separately from treatments to remove vanadium chlorides from crude titanium

tetrachloride. The present invention is a method to remove metal chloride impurities including the chlorides of aluminum and vanadium in a way that minimizes the loss of process raw materials such as titanium containing materials, coke, chlorine, and vanadium and aluminum passivating agents.

The present process is more cost effective, produces less waste and more product and is the result of a simple change in the sequence of and locations for the additions of the aluminum and vanadium passivating agents.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a method in the purification of a crude titanium tetrachloride chlorinator discharge from the carbochlorination of titanium containing materials to minimize the loss of raw materials resulting from passivation of aluminum chloride and vanadium oxychloride, comprising:

- (a) mixing into a crude titanium tetrachloride chlorinator discharge comprising vanadium chlorides and aluminum chloride:
  - (1) a vanadium passivating agent to passivate the vanadium chlorides present and form in the discharge one or more easy-to-separate vanadium-containing compounds, and
  - (2) an aluminum passivating agent to passivate the aluminum chloride present and form in the discharge one or more easy-to-separate aluminum-containing compounds wherein the aluminum passivating agent is selected from the group consisting of water, water containing solutions, water containing mixtures, and carboxylic acids,

#### with the proviso that:

- (i) when, after mixing the vanadium passivating agent into the chlorinator discharge, titanium oxychloride is formed in the discharge, no aluminum passivating agent is mixed into the discharge; and
- (ii) when, after mixing the vanadium passivating agent into the chlorinator discharge, no titanium oxychloride is formed, mixing into the discharge an amount of aluminum passivating agent to passivate the aluminum chloride and react with

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## the titanium tetrachloride to form titanium oxychloride; and

(b) separating from the titanium tetrachloride chlorinator discharge the easy-to-separate vanadium- and aluminum-containing compounds to form a purified titanium tetrachloride.

In the present process the separation typically depends upon the phases present in the discharge and suitable separation techniques are well known in the art. Typically a distillation process is employed for vapor-liquid-solid separation, preferably selected from the group consisting of flash distillation and multi-stage distillation. The solid-liquid separation process can be a filtration or centrifugation.

The addition of the vanadium and aluminum passivating agents may be made such that the vanadium passivating agent and the aluminum passivating agent are mixed into the discharge essentially simultaneously or the vanadium passivating agent may be mixed into the discharge before the aluminum passivating agent is mixed into the discharge, or the vanadium passivating agent may be mixed into the discharge after the aluminum passivating agent is mixed into the discharge or the vanadium passivating agent may be mixed into the discharge both before and after the aluminum passivating agent is mixed into the discharge.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a method in the purification of a crude titanium tetrachloride chlorinator discharge from the carbochlorination of titanium containing materials to minimize the loss of raw materials resulting from passivation of aluminum chloride and vanadium chlorides.

The term vanadium chlorides as used herein includes vanadium oxychloride compounds and other vanadium chloride compounds that are not susceptible to removal from crude titanium tetrachloride by distillation.

In the present invention, the passivation of vanadium chlorides may be accomplished in a two step addition of the vanadium passivating agent or in a single step addition. In the two step addition, a vanadium passivating agent is mixed into the discharge in an amount sufficient to reduce, but not eliminate the vanadium chlorides present and form one or more easy-to-separate vanadium-containing compounds. When titanium oxychloride is present in the discharge treated with the vanadium passivating agent, no aluminum passivating agent is added. When titanium oxychloride is not present, an amount of aluminum passivating

agent sufficient to form titanium oxychloride is added to form easy-to-separate aluminum-containing compounds. The easy-to-separate vanadium- and aluminum-containing compounds may be separated from the discharge. Then, a second addition step of a vanadium passivating agent in an amount sufficient to passivate the remaining vanadium chlorides is made to form easy-to-separate vanadium-containing compounds, followed by a separation step to form a purified titanium tetrachloride.

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In the single step addition of the vanadium passivating agent, sufficient vanadium passivating agent is mixed into the discharge to passivate all of the vanadium chlorides in a single step, and, if necessary, addition of aluminum passivating agent is made if there remains active aluminum chloride in the discharge as determined by the absence of titanium oxychloride in the discharge. In any event, all of the aluminum chloride present in the discharge must be passivated, no matter which method (two step or single step) is used to passivate the vanadium chlorides, since the presence of active aluminum chloride after this point in the overall purification process will result in corrosion of downstream equipment.

The terms passivating and passivation as used herein mean converting the vanadium- and aluminum-containing compounds present in the crude titanium tetrachloride discharge to compounds that are easy-to-separate from the titanium tetrachloride and neutralizing the compounds' adverse effects. "Easy-to-separate" typically means a solid, but it also includes compounds that may be separated from the titanium tetrachloride by distillation or removal as an adsorbed species, and the like. Surprisingly, it has been found that the product of the passivation of vanadium oxychloride in crude titanium tetrachloride discharge with an organic oil is a passivating agent for aluminum chloride. The result of this discovery according to the present invention is an improved chlorination process wherein there is the potential to save production costs by reducing the titanium yield loss while at the same time improving raw material utilization to reduce process cost and the amount waste - solid, liquid, and vapor.

In the present invention, the point of addition of the passivating agents into the flow of the chlorinator product stream, that is, crude titanium tetrachloride discharge, may be optimized for (1) the reduction

and elimination of corrosion from active aluminum chloride, (2) minimal yield losses of raw materials, and (3) to take advantage of the ability of passivated vanadium compounds to provide at least part of the total amount of passivating agent needed to control passivation of aluminum chloride, as measured by titanium oxychloride concentration.

Addition of the aluminum passivating agent is dependent on whether there is titanium oxychloride in the crude titanium tetrachloride chlorinator discharge stream. Aluminum chloride is completely passivated once titanium oxychloride is formed in the discharge. Aluminum passivating agent may be mixed into the chlorinator discharge simultaneously with the vanadium passivating agent or before addition of the vanadium passivating agent or after addition of the vanadium passivating agent. After mixing the vanadium or aluminum passivating agent into the chlorinator discharge, the discharge is analyzed for titanium oxychloride. If titanium oxychloride is formed, addition of aluminum passivating agent is not required. If no titanium oxychloride is formed, then an amount of aluminum passivating agent sufficient to passivate the aluminum chloride and react with the titanium tetrachloride to form titanium oxychloride is mixed into the chlorinator discharge.

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Water is most preferred as the aluminum passivating agent in the present process. Water solutions or mixtures may be used as passivating agents even if the materials other than the water show no reactivity towards aluminum chloride.

Since some fraction of the aluminum chloride is passivated by the reaction product of vanadium oxychloride with the vanadium passivating agent, it is preferable to add only 1 to 1.5 times the amount of passivating agent to stoichiometrically react with the remaining aluminum in the discharge. More preferably the amount of aluminum passivating agent added is 1.1 to 1.3 times the stoichiometric requirement.

Organic oils have been found to be useful as vanadium passivating agents including petroleum oils, such as mineral oils and waxes, animal fat, and vegetable oils and combinations thereof. The organic oil may be hydrogenated. A specific example of a useful organic oil is hydrogenated naphthenic oil. The essential element in selecting a substance as a vanadium passivating agent is the ability of the reaction product of the passivating agent with vanadium oxychloride to function as an aluminum passivating agent. Those skilled in the art may find other organic

compounds that are functionally equivalent to an organic oil that are also useful as the vanadium passivating agent. Similarly, some inorganic vanadium passivating agents may also be useful as functional equivalents to the organic oil, so long as there are no detrimental effects, such as color formation in the titanium tetrachloride, or where the passivated compounds may become re-chlorinated. Especially preferred as the organic oil vanadium passivating agent is a hydrogenated naphthenic oil.

The amount of vanadium passivating agent is based on the agent's stoichiometric reaction ratio with the vanadium chlorides. Ideally, this ratio should be determined experimentally, rather than theoretically. Preferably the amount of vanadium passivating agent added is 0.8 to 1.2 times the stoichiometric quantity required to react with the vanadium chlorides to be removed from the stream being treated, which may be all or any fraction of the vanadium present in that stream. More preferably the amount of vanadium passivating agent is from 0.95 to 1.1 times the stoichiometric requirement.

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Regardless of the amount of vanadium passivating agent added, it is possible to calculate the amount of vanadium removal reaction products capable of passivating aluminum chloride and then reduce the amount of aluminum passivating agent or reduce the addition rate by an equivalent amount which can substantially reduce titanium losses due to excess addition of aluminum passivating agents which react with titanium tetrachloride. For example, one method to calculate the amount of vanadium removal reaction products capable of passivating aluminum chloride is by infrared spectroscopy, based on concentration of vanadium oxychloride in the chlorinator discharge.

Following addition of the passivating agents, there is provided a separation step wherein the easy-to-separate vanadium- and aluminum-containing compounds are separated from the titanium tetrachloride chlorinator discharge to form a purified titanium tetrachloride using a vapor-liquid-solid separation process or a solid-liquid separation process. A vapor-liquid-solid separation process is typically a distillation process, preferably selected from the group consisting of flashing distillation and multi-stage distillation. A solid-liquid separation process is typically filtration or centrifugation.

The separation process may occur in one or more steps. For example, depending on the order of addition of the vanadium and

aluminum passivating agents, intermediate separation steps may be performed. Particularly, in a two step addition of the vanadium passivating agent, a separation step may be performed after all of the aluminum chloride has been converted to easy-to-separate aluminum-containing compounds. A separation step is performed after the second addition of the vanadium passivating agent.

Alternatively, following a separation step after addition of vanadium passivating agent, a purge containing products from the passivation of vanadium chlorides may be used as the aluminum passivating agent.

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Process control methods for the addition of the aluminum passivating agent, the vanadium passivating agent, or both can be applied to the present invention. For example, the control methods disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,562,312 are particularly useful for controlling addition of aluminum passivating agent. Therein is provided, an in-process, real time control loop capable of controlling the passivation of aluminum chloride in crude titanium tetrachloride chlorinator discharge wherein an aluminum passivating agent is mixed into the discharge in an amount sufficient to form titanium oxychloride. The amount of aluminum passivating agent added is controlled based on comparison of the titanium oxychloride concentration measured in-process with an aim point. Preferably, the concentration of titanium oxychloride is measured by an optical method selected from the group consisting of transmission filter Infrared spectroscopy, transmission Fourier Transform Infrared spectroscopy, Raman spectroscopy, Attenuated Total Reflectance Infrared spectroscopy, and Attenuated Total Reflectance Fourier Transform Infrared spectroscopy.

The presence and concentration of titanium oxychloride may be measured by use of transmission filter Infrared spectroscopy, transmission Fourier Transform Infrared spectroscopy, Raman spectroscopy, and Attenuated Total Reflectance Infrared spectroscopy, and Attenuated Total Reflectance Fourier Transform Infrared spectroscopy in a frequency range of from 800 to 2000 cm-1.

For accuracy and precision, it is most preferred to measure the presence and the concentration of titanium oxychloride by diamond based Attenuated Total Reflectance Fourier Transform Infrared at a frequency of about 820cm-1. Diamond based attenuated reflectance means that the infrared probe or detector placed in the process stream has a diamond

element. Suitable probe units include those manufactured by ASI Applied Systems of Millersville, MD, Axiom Analytic, Inc. of Irvine, CA and others.

In the following examples VOCl<sub>3</sub> passivation is measured by Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR).

#### 5 Example 1

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A round bottomed flask was filled with 100 mL TiCl<sub>4</sub>, 0.92 g VOCl<sub>3</sub> (5.31 mmol), and 0.174 g AlCl<sub>3</sub> (1.30 mmol). The AlCl<sub>3</sub> was handled airfree to avoid moisture contamination. The reaction mixture was heated to 100°C. Hydrogenated naphthenic oil (ERGON Incorporated's product brand Ergon H-750) was added (1.0333 g). The reaction mixture was held at temperature for 30 minutes. At this point, all of the VOCl<sub>3</sub> was passivated, as measured by FTIR. To determine how much unreacted AlCl<sub>3</sub> remained, 30 microliter (1.61 mmol) of water were added by syringe. Any AlCl<sub>3</sub> in solution would react with the water before TiOCl<sub>2</sub> was formed. A total of 1531 ppm TiOCl<sub>2</sub> was generated from the water addition, as observed by FTIR. If all of the AlCl<sub>3</sub> was present, only 280 ppm should have been observed. Since an extra 1301 ppm TiOCl<sub>2</sub> (1.67 mmol) formed, all of the AlCl<sub>3</sub> had already been passivated in the solution. Example 2

A round bottomed flask was filled with 100 mL TiCl<sub>4</sub>, 0.92 g VOCl<sub>3</sub> (5.31 mmol), and 1.74 g AlCl<sub>3</sub> (13.0 mmol). The AlCl<sub>3</sub> was handled airfree to avoid moisture contamination. The reaction mixture was heated to 100°C. The oil from Example 1 was added (1.0401 g). The reaction mixture was held at temperature for 30 minutes. At this point, all of the VOCl<sub>3</sub> was passivated, as measured by FTIR. To determine how much unreacted AlCl<sub>3</sub> remained, 290 microliter (16.1 mmol) of water were added by syringe. A total of 6808 ppm TiOCl<sub>2</sub> was generated from the water addition. If all of the AlCl<sub>3</sub> was still present, only 2371 ppm TiOCl<sub>2</sub> should have been observed. Since an extra 4437 ppm TiOCl<sub>2</sub> (5.70 mmol) formed, part of the AlCl<sub>3</sub> was passivated in the solution. The amount of AlCl<sub>3</sub> reacted was stoichiometrically equivalent to the amount of oxygen initially present in solution as part of the VOCl<sub>3</sub>, within experimental error. Example 3

Water was added as an aluminum passivating agent to a crude TiCl<sub>4</sub> stream containing metal chloride contaminants AlCl<sub>3</sub> and VOCl<sub>3</sub> produced by the chlorination of titanium-bearing ore, following discharge from the chlorinator and separation of condensable solids. Water addition

was in control by the control method described in U.S. Patent No. 6,562,312. The hydrogenated, naphthenic oil, from Example 1 (vanadium passivating agent) was added to the TiCl<sub>4</sub> stream at the same location as the water addition. In contrast to operating the process in the absence of the vanadium passivating agent, the demand for aluminum passivating agent was reduced by 50% while reducing VOCl<sub>3</sub> by 20% of its original concentration.

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#### **CLAIMS**

#### What is claimed is:

- 1. A method in the purification of a crude titanium tetrachloride chlorinator discharge from the carbochlorination of titanium containing materials to minimize the loss of raw materials resulting from passivation of aluminum chloride and vanadium oxychloride, comprising:
  - (a) mixing into the crude titanium tetrachloride chlorinator discharge comprising vanadium chlorides and aluminum chloride:
    - (1) a vanadium passivating agent to passivate the vanadium chlorides present and form in the discharge one or more easy-to-separate vanadium-containing compounds, and
    - (2) an aluminum passivating agent to passivate the aluminum chloride present and form one or more easy-to-separate aluminum-containing compounds wherein the aluminum passivating agent is selected from the group consisting of water, water containing solutions, water containing mixtures, and carboxylic acids,

#### with the proviso that:

- (i) when, after mixing the vanadium passivating agent into the chlorinator discharge, titanium oxychloride is formed in the discharge, no aluminum passivating agent is mixed into the discharge; and
- (ii) when after mixing the vanadium passivating agent into the chlorinator discharge, no titanium oxychloride is formed in the discharge, mixing into the discharge an amount of aluminum passivating agent to passivate the aluminum chlorides and react with the titanium tetrachloride to form titanium oxychloride;

#### and

(b) separating from titanium tetrachloride chlorinator discharge the easy-to-separate vanadium- and aluminum-

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containing compounds to form a purified titanium tetrachloride.

- 2. The process of Claim 1 wherein the separation process is selected from the group consisting of flashing distillation, multi-stage distillation, a solid-liquid separation process, filtration, and centrifugation.
- 3. The process of Claim 1 wherein the vanadium passivating agent and the aluminum passivating agent are mixed into the discharge essentially simultaneously.
- 4. The process of Claim 1 wherein the vanadium passivating agent is mixed into the discharge before the aluminum passivating agent is mixed into the discharge stream.
- 5. The process of Claim 1 wherein the vanadium passivating agent is mixed into the discharge after the aluminum passivating agent is mixed into the discharge stream.
- 6. The process of Claim 1 wherein the vanadium passivating agent is mixed into the discharge in an amount sufficient to reduce the concentration of, but not eliminate the vanadium chlorides present.
- 7. The process of Claim 1 wherein the aluminum passivating agent is comprised of a purge containing products from the passivation of vanadium chlorides taken from a process step following the separation step.
- 8. The process of Claim 1 wherein the addition of the vanadium passivating agent and the aluminum passivating agent are controlled by a process control method.
- 9. The process of Claim 1 wherein the vanadium passivating agent is an organic oil.
- 10. The process of Claim 1 wherein the vanadium passivating agent is a petroleum oil, an animal fat, a vegetable oil or a combination thereof
- 11. The process of Claim 1 wherein the vanadium passivating agent is a hydrogenated naphthenic oil.

### INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Int: Unal Application No PCT/US2004/000765

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IPC 7 C01G23/02

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

#### B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) IPC  $\,7\,$  C01G

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

CHEM ABS Data, EPO-Internal, PAJ, WPI Data, INSPEC, COMPENDEX

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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A	page 2, line 21-71	2,4-6,8, 9,11
<b>X</b>	DATABASE CA 'Online! CHEMICAL ABSTRACTS SERVICE, COLUMBUS, OHIO, US; JAEGER, LUBOMIR ET AL: "Purification of crude titanium tetrachloride with surface-active substances" retrieved from STN Database accession no. 56:44009 XP002281482 abstract & CS 97 317 C (JAEGER, LUBOMIR;SIMEK, BRETISLAV) 8 July 1957 (1957-07-08)	1

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.	Patent family members are listed in annex.
Special categories of cited documents:  'A' document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance  'E' earlier document but published on or after the international filing date  'L' document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)  'O' document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means  'P' document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed  Date of the actual completion of the international search	<ul> <li>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</li> <li>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone</li> <li>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</li> <li>"&amp;" document member of the same patent tamily</li> </ul>
25 May 2004	09/06/2004
Name and mailing address of the ISA  European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2  NL – 2280 HV Rijswljk  Tel. (+31–70) 340–2040, Tx. 31 651 epo ni,  Fax: (+31–70) 340–3016	Authorized officer Werner, H

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Int Application No
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